

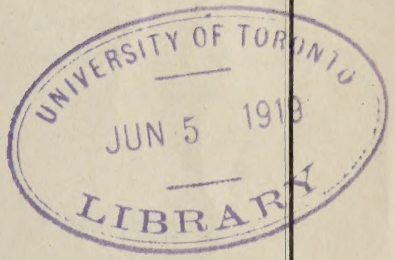
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International Conference of
Red Cross Societies

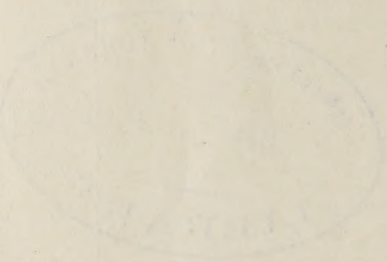
Proposed Plan
For World-Wide Coördination
of Red Cross Activities

by
Henry Tomeroy Davison



The American Red Cross
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International Conference of Red Cross Societies

Proposed Plan for World-Wide Coördination of Red Cross Activities

At a recent conference held in Paris, the following outline of a proposed plan for world-wide extension and coördination of Red Cross activities was submitted by Henry P. Davison, former Chairman of the War Council of the American Red Cross, and now Chairman of a Committee which includes representatives of the Red Cross Societies of France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the United States:

“The International Red Cross Committee at Geneva has called a convention of the Red Cross organizations of the world to meet at Geneva thirty days after the declaration of peace.

“This call was issued at the request of the Red Cross Societies of the United States of America, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Japan, whose representatives have constituted themselves a ‘Committee of Red Cross societies’ to formulate and to propose to Red Cross societies of the world an extended program of Red Cross activities in the interest of humanity.

“The governments of the five countries represented in this Committee have, from the outset, been fully informed of the proposal to hold such a world conference.* They regard it as important and each has separately manifested its desire that a plan embodying the purposes of this Committee be prepared for submission to such conference.

The Motive of the Plan

“The world is appalled at the wide-spread human suffering which has followed in the wake of the war. Problems of food and reconstruction are of such magnitude that they must of course be dealt with and financed by governments, but in addition, there is a vast field

for supplementary and emergency effort on the part of voluntary national relief organizations.

“The original Geneva convention was designed primarily to guarantee neutrality to those actually engaged in the care of sick and wounded combatants. This war has shown, however, that the battlefield of modern warfare extends into every home of the nations involved. Out of this fact has grown the necessity that the Red Cross should, in time of war, extend its ministrations to homeless refugees as well as to civilians in their homes behind the lines.

“The International Red Cross at Geneva has from the very beginning done an important work. Throughout the present war, its high principles of both neutrality and helpfulness have been maintained. Its position of preëminence as the great natural agency should be upheld, and it is the belief that its ideals for extending relief in time of war can be applied with equal vigor and effectiveness in time of peace.

“The experience of the war has developed an advanced practice in care for the welfare of motherhood and childhood. It has likewise demonstrated novel and most promising possibilities in the care and treatment of tuberculosis and other diseases.

“It is accordingly of unusual importance at this moment in the world’s history that representatives of the various peoples should meet in conferences, compare information and experience and determine how voluntary effort in every country may best exert itself in the service of humanity.

“It is peculiarly fitting that such a world conference should meet under the ægis of the Red Cross, for the Red Cross has shown itself to be an instrument of peculiar flexibility and adaptability with which to promote efforts for the relief of suffering humanity. The Red Cross emblem signifies next to human sympathy, above all else—neutrality—neutrality as between nations, as between races, as between religions, as between classes. While, in its organizing form in each country, it enjoys intimate relations with its own, yet it preserves its voluntary and democratic character.

“It is expected that out of this world gathering there will emerge an international organization through which the peoples of the world may cooperate in stimulating and developing activities in the respective countries for the betterment of mankind. Such activities would foster the study of human disease, promote sound measures for public health and sanitation, the welfare of children and mothers, the educa-

tion and training of nurses and the care and prevention of tuberculosis, venereal diseases, malaria and other chronic or infectious diseases, and would provide measures for handling problems of world relief in emergencies, such as fire, famine, and pestilence.

Plan of Procedure

"It is the purpose of the 'Committee of Red Cross societies' to proceed immediately to the definite formulation of the plan to be submitted to the World Red Cross Congress, and for that purpose, it will establish headquarters at Cannes, France.

"To that point will be invited the world's leading experts in public health, tuberculosis, hygiene and sanitation, and child welfare. It is expected that the past experience of the nations will be carefully canvassed, with a view to the formulation of programs of action which can be laid before the Congress at Geneva. Following that event, these programs would be communicated to the Red Cross societies of all the nations; societies would each, in its own way, stimulate the carrying out of those programs among the respective peoples.

"It is proposed that following the world Congress, there will be established at Geneva a permanent working organization. Such organization will comprise experts who will keep in touch with the developments throughout the world in the various lines in which the Red Cross is interested. Immediately developments should have been realized in any part of the world, either in research or practice, full information would be communicated to the central organization at Geneva and there scrutinized. This information and expert advice concerning it would then be immediately transmitted to the Red Cross societies of the world.

"It is not the thought that the international organization at Geneva would itself carry out the programs adopted, or that the Red Cross societies of the individual countries would themselves necessarily conduct operations along the respective lines indicated.

"It is the plan, however, that the international organization at Geneva will thereafter continue to formulate and propose lines of Red Cross effort in the interest of humanity. These programs will forthwith be communicated to the individual Red Cross societies.

"Efforts would be made by the international organization to stimulate the development in each country of an active and efficient Red

Cross organization in keeping with the newly conceived possibilities of the Red Cross movement.

“Each national Red Cross society in the light of information from the international organization or on the basis of its own experience or desires will stimulate among the people of its own country effective measures to accomplish the results aimed at.

The Meaning of the Plan as a Whole


“The conception involves not merely efforts to relieve human suffering but to prevent it; not alone the suffering of one people but an attempt to arouse all peoples to a sense of their responsibility for the welfare of their fellow-beings throughout the world.

“In brief, the plan contemplates the formation of what will be, in effect, an association in the interest of all humanity.

“It is a program, both ideal and practical; ideal in that its supreme aim is humanity; practical in that it seeks means and measures to meet the tragic crises which are daily recurrent in the lives of all mankind.

“Surely, the operation of such a plan would develop a new fraternity and sympathy among the peoples. By so doing, an important contribution will have been made toward the success of the League of Nations, and this present plan should be viewed as a vital factor in the larger undertaking.

“The League of Nations aims to hold all peoples together in an effort to avoid war and to insure freedom; this particular plan aims at devising a procedure whereby all peoples may cooperate actively in promoting the health and happiness of one another.”



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